

February 12, 2013

The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310

Dear Assistant Secretary Darcy:

I write to you regarding a proposal by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to install physical barriers along portions of the Cumberland River that would block boating access for fishermen to the tailwaters of the Barkley and Wolf Creek Dams in Kentucky.

I have heard from many of my constituents regarding this proposal—including County Judge Executives, officials with the Kentucky Division of Fish and Wildlife and representatives from the Pennyriple Area Development District—all of whom are opposed to USACE's plan to block fishing access to these waters. I am told that USACE's proposal would have a detrimental impact not only on the communities surrounding these dams, but also on Kentucky's larger economy due to the volume of tourists that visit these areas for the express purpose of fishing the tailwaters of the Barkley and Wolf Creek Dams.

In addition to the negative impacts USACE's plan would have on recreational fishing and tourism in these communities, I am told it would cost the federal government some \$3 million to implement. With a federal deficit above \$16 trillion and counting, I believe it would be irresponsible to unnecessarily spend an additional \$3 million in taxpayer dollars on an initiative to which local communities are vigorously opposed and that would harm Kentucky's economy.

Instead, I believe USACE should work with these communities on an alternative proposal to ensure safety while allowing access to waters that responsible anglers have safely fished for years. Local officials have suggested that one such alternative is for USACE to focus its efforts on the rare occasions when the dam gates are open and spilling—apparently the only time the waters themselves present an active danger. I stand ready to work with the affected communities and USACE on alternative proposals that would protect Kentucky anglers' access to these prized fishing waters while ensuring prudent safety practices.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.



MITCH McCONNELL
UNITED STATES SENATOR

Cc: Lt. Colonel James DeLapp, Nashville District Commander